United Nations S/PV.8187

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8187th meeting

Thursday, 22 February 2018, 4 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Alotaibi	(Kuwait)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2018/125)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-04835 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2018/125)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic; Mr. Esa Pulkkinen, Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic; and His Excellency Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of Morocco, in his capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Nébié and Mr. Pulkkinen are joining us via video-teleconference from Bouar, Central African Republic, and Brussels, respectively.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/125, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, Mr. Nébié, Mr. Pulkkinen, Ambassador Hilale and Ambassador Bernard Tanoh-Boutchoue, Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic.

Before giving the floor to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, I call on all briefers to limit their statements to five minutes in accordance with paragraphs 22 and 41 of the memo circulated by the President.

I now give the floor to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga.

Mr. Onanga-Anyanga (*spoke in French*): It is an honour and a welcome duty to speak before the Security Council today. I look forward to taking part with the other important Central African Republic partners here at this meeting, in particular my colleague and brother Ambassador Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic, who, as you mentioned, Mr. President, will be speaking later via video-teleconference from Bouar, where, together with other members of the panel of facilitators of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, he is pursuing his noble mission in the search for lasting peace in that country.

The report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2018/125) has already been submitted to the Security Council. I shall simply make a few additional remarks.

I am here today to address the issue of the violence and atrocities that continue to affect a large swath of the Central African civilian population. The unacceptable violence and human rights violations are the work of armed groups that have not yet renounced armed violence and are slow to engage in dialogue with the Government. The result of that obstinacy reminds us that in spite of our efforts, the path to peace, stability and reconciliation in Central Africa remains long and arduous. Returning refugees and the internally displaced to their homes remains a challenge. This veritable human tragedy is exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation, in which life for nearly half of the Central African population is unimaginable, given the lack of emergency humanitarian assistance.

I should like to pay tribute once again to humanitarian workers in the Central African Republic, in particular those who have lost their lives in an attempt to save millions of others. It is because of such acts of heroism, and in particular the daily sacrifices and tireless efforts of the staff of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), who often risk their lives, that we have been able to mitigate the impact of armed conflicts and prevent so many others.

Nonetheless, their sacrifice is not in vain. Despite great adversity, peace lies ahead in the Central African

Republic. Every day we regain some of the legitimacy once lost. The Government is working assiduously to restore the authority of the State and to strengthen newly established democratic institutions. The inclusive political process initiated by President Touadéra is gradually gaining ground and now has the full support of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, backed by the United Nations and all of Central Africa's other strategic partners.

The ongoing dialogue and political process involving the main actors and partners now underpin multidimensional efforts under way to emerge from the crisis, such as the Government's attempts to better represent contemporary society and the tangible progress made in enhancing the authority of the State by appointing prefects in the 16 prefectures and in the majority of sub-prefectures. The new prefect of Ndélé, in the north-east, has just assumed office. It is hoped that the success of the pilot disarmament, demobilization and reintegration project will enable it to be launched on a wider scale, thanks financial and technical support provided by the World Bank.

All elements of MINUSCA are involved in the process, as it is vital to stability in Central Africa. That shift in the right direction is also demonstrated in the strengthening of national judicial institutions. In addition, preparations for the start of the work of the Special Criminal Court are well under way. Two days ago, the Government issued a decree confirming the appointment of judicial police officers, which would allow the Court to start its investigations. The message is clear: the fight against persistent impunity, which has been the source of recurring conflict in Central Africa, has begun. This formal judicial institution will very soon be complemented by new transitional justice mechanisms, which will lead to an improved balance between justice and national reconciliation and guarantee lasting peace.

Thanks to the multifaceted efforts under way, security and defence structures are now undergoing far-reaching reforms. The central role played by the European Union Training Mission to reform the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA), is commendable. For its part, MINUSCA is strengthening its support of Central African security forces by recruiting gendarmerie and police officers at the technical level and by supporting the implementation of various strategic frameworks. Every effort must now be made to sustain the gains made and to marshal considerable resources for the next five years. The support of key partners, such as France, the United States of America, China and the Russian Federation, should be underscored. Not long ago, the mere idea of a joint MINUSCA-FACA endeavour was unimaginable. We are now partners in field operations, such as in Paoua and Obo, in the south-east. At the request of the Security Council, the Central African authorities and MINUSCA have agreed on a plan for the use and deployment of the Central African defence and security forces. In May, the Secretary-General will submit to the Council a detailed plan to ensure more effective collaboration and support.

(*spoke in English*)

As we contemplate ways and means to strengthen the support that we provide to the national defence and security forces, we remain dedicated to optimizing our own performance. Moreover, our commitment to performance is as strong as our resolve to abide by the highest standards of conduct and discipline. Let it be clear that sexual exploitation and abuse have no place in peacekeeping. The Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy will remain an integral part of our duty to protect.

Efforts are under way to more effectively protect civilian populations, while ensuring the safety and security of our own peacekeepers. Because of the nature of the threats we face in the Central African Republic, unless MINUSCA has the capacity to apply meaningful military pressure on armed groups that remain reluctant to embrace peace, no peace process will have the chance to succeed. That is why I am highly appreciative of the ongoing outreach by the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix to secure the 900 additional troops that the Security Council authorized in the renewed mandate. I would like to thank the troop-contributing countries for their dedication and their sacrifice for the cause of peace in the Central African Republic.

But the work is not over yet. More will be required from us all. The fate of millions of civilians hinges on the commitment of well-equipped, well-trained and determined troops who use all the power bestowed upon them by the Council to protect populations from harm. I am grateful to our military and police forces for their hard work and robust posture, which we observed in Bambari early last year, and in Bocaranga and Bang in late 2017. That is the current situation in Paoua, where the MINUSCA force is engaged in a military operation

to create a safe and secure area for the people of Paoua and the entire prefecture of Ouham-Pendé, and we are determined to do even more.

Together with the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, the Mission continues to work towards the sustainable reduction of the presence of and the threat posed by armed groups through a comprehensive and proactive approach. The additional 900 troops will boost those efforts by enhancing our flexibility and our capacity to react. As highlighted in the new mandate, MINUSCA is supporting Government-led processes to reduce conflict at the local level to complement and support the African initiative.

I must emphasize that the success of our collective effort will require the delivery of tangible peace dividends for the people of the Central African Republic. Urgent efforts are needed to translate the country's recovery and peacebuilding plan into an effective programme for change that can be used in both governance and people's livelihoods. As just briefly outlined, and as challenging as things are, the picture in the Central African Republic is not as hopeless as the raw numbers and media reports make it appear. With the continuous support of the Council and everyone's sacrifice and dedication — first and foremost, those of the Central Africans themselves — there are reasons to remain hopeful and to believe that an era of peace, stability and prosperity will soon be within reach.

(*spoke in French*)

In my remarks today, I have endeavoured to give a brief overview of the challenges in the Central African Republic, but I have also tried to highlight the many windows of opportunity to a more stable future. The region and the international community have a vital role to play in helping the Government of the Central African Republic build on its accomplishments. It is essential that the country remain a priority for the Security Council and continue to receive international support commensurate with its strategic priorities. In so doing, we will help create the conditions for inclusive socioeconomic recovery and long-term peace and stability in the Central African Republic.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Onanga-Anyanga for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Nébié.

Mr. Nébié (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I thank the Security Council for the opportunity to brief it on the current situation in the Central African Republic.

It is thanks to the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) that I am speaking to the Council from the city of Bouar, about 450 kilometres north-west of Bangui in the prefecture of Nana-Mambéré. My briefing will focus on the following points: the status of implementation of the road map of African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in Central Africa, the agenda of the Initiative and the impact it has had on the ground.

With regard to the status of implementation, the panel of facilitators undertook a first field visit in November and December 2017 to meet with the senior military and political leadership of 14 armed groups recognized by the Government. The main objectives of the field mission were to establish initial contact between the armed groups and the panel of facilitators with a view to creating an atmosphere of trust, deliver a message from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to the armed groups, invite them to join the Initiative's road map, and hear the armed groups' demands. At the end of the first field visit, the main concerns voiced were political, socioeconomic, security-related, administrative and judicial. In addition to meeting with armed groups, the panel also met with local players in civil and political life to hear their concerns. In the interests of transparency and openness, the results of these conversations were shared with the Head of State, the President and other the senior-ranking members of the National Assembly, the political parties, the diplomatic corps, civil-society organizations and the general public through a press conference.

Secondly, with regard to the agenda of the Initiative, from 19 February to 17 March the panel will have been in the field for its second visit, during which it will meet the same players as in the first field visit. The main objectives of this round are to extract written demands and proposed solutions from the parties, build on the trust established between the panel and the armed groups in the first round, prepare the armed groups for dialogue with the Government, obtain a firmer commitment to non-violence, and create conditions that ensure the safety of all populations and respect for State authority and humanitarian actors. At the end of this second round, the groups' demands will be submitted

to the Government for study. A seminar on capacity-building for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and crises will be organized for the armed groups and local players in civil and political life. After that, the dialogue with the Government will be organized.

Thirdly, with regard to the Initiative's impact, signs of hope for a peace agreement were already perceptible at the end of the first field visit. All the armed groups with which we met welcomed the message of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, who called on them to join the peace and reconciliation process and to end all forms of violence. They have read the content of the Initiative road map and are committed to reporting back to their respective bases. They shared their concerns with the panel of facilitators and showed their willingness to discuss issues of concern with the Government.

During the first round, it was also agreed to establish a permanent contact group between the panel and the armed groups. Through this mechanism, the panel questioned armed groups that had engaged in confrontations or shown a desire to undermine peace. This effort has contributed to lowering tensions in certain regions, causing some leaders of the politico-military movements to change their positions and accept diplomats and prefects in their areas, as Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga mentioned earlier, and to persuading others to agree to renounce confrontation and enter into the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration programme. These results are also the combined outcome of the efforts of the Central African authorities and the integrated action of all partners in the international community, who have been resolutely committed to finding peace in the Central African Republic. In this respect, I welcome the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2387 (2017).

In conclusion, and to make a recommendation on security, a small amount of progress has clearly been made, but it is progress all the same, particularly when we keep in mind the depth and duration of the crisis in the Central African Republic. It is true that what follows is likely to be difficult, but all those living in the Central African Republic have witnessed the progress made thus far and expressed optimism and hope for a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the country.

I therefore renew my plea for the continued support and solidarity of the Security Council and the international community as a whole for the Central African Republic, specifically by encouraging President Faustin Archange Touadéra and his Government to selflessly pursue their many efforts that are beginning to yield good results, by making a forceful appeal to the armed groups to fully participate in the dialogue process that is currently being prepared, and by assisting the panel so that it may continue to develop its programme.

I also take this opportunity to reiterate my thanks to Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Head of MINUSCA, and his entire team for their full support and assistance in the ongoing political process. My thanks also go to the European Union and other development partners.

The five minutes allocated to me could not be enough to outline in full detail what is happening in the Central African Republic. But we who are on the ground are committed and determined, and we believe that the Central African people deserve our assistance through to the end of this effort and that we shall achieve peace in the Central African Republic in 2018.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Nébié for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Pulkkinen.

Mr. Pulkkinen: I am Lieutenant General Esa Pulkkinen, and I am grateful to have the opportunity to address the Security Council on the topic of the Central African Republic and the biannual report (S/2018/125) of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

The European Union (EU) greatly welcomes the recent extension of the mandate of MINUSCA, which was adopted in November 2017 (resolution 2387 (2017)). As the Operational Commander, I particularly note that MINUSCA has been given the task of providing support to the progressive and coordinated redeployment of the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA) units trained by the European Union Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM-RCA) as an element of the strategy to extend State authority. In addition to the extremely valuable joint deployments already under way, this effort is crucial to restoring State authority. Moreover, it is central to the United Nations and EU achieving their wider strategic objectives in the Central African Republic.

To put my role and that of my organization in context, I am the Director of the EU's Military Planning and Conduct Capability. This is a Brussels-based organization that carries out the roles and responsibilities of an operational headquarters. Currently under my command are three EU training missions in Africa, one of them being the training mission in the Central African Republic.

I should underline that the EUTM-RCA is an unarmed training mission. It contributes to defence sector reform within the Central African effort to that end being coordinated by MINUSCA. It assists in the progressive development of a democratically controlled, professional, credible, accountable and ethnically and regionally balanced FACA. Its mandate includes close coordination with MINUSCA. The joint MINUSCA-EU delegation and EUTM-RCA support plan on security sector reform and the rule of law in the Central African Republic, signed in July last year, aims to define the basis of our coordination and complementarity in all our activities.

Despite some progress, we remain seriously concerned by the worsening security and humanitarian situation. The crisis in the Central African Republic will not be resolved by force, but rather through dialogue, justice and reconciliation. In that context, the EU fully supports President Touadéra and his Government in their efforts to build peace in the Central African Republic.

The Council is aware that the Central African armed forces, trained by EUTM, have already started to deploy to operations, with the support of MINUSCA — albeit in small numbers and despite considerable logistical constraints. Reports on their performance in those joint deployments have been favourable, both from the operational point of view and with regard to non-governmental organizations and public opinion. Although they are a step in the right direction, these small-scale operations, originating in Bangui, are not enough to reoperationalize the FACA.

All political actors and international partners agree on the need to restore State authority throughout the country as a key factor in resolving the crisis. Therefore, the redeployment of the armed forces and the internal security forces is recognized as critical to enabling the return of public institutions and services to the entire territory, as well as to deterring armed groups.

In order to restore authority to the regions, a 9,800-strong army is planned by 2021, with around 4,500 of those troops redeployed outside Bangui. That implies a huge effort: infrastructure development, sustainment capability and effective logistical support will be crucial.

In the context of a Government that has been in power for almost two years and whose army is largely confined to Bangui, MINUSCA is the key enabler that will allow us to capitalize on what has been achieved to date. The troops that EUTM has trained are now being equipped, and we cannot lose momentum in their deployment and operationalization.

MINUSCA remains a critical factor for operationalizing the FACA and for ensuring basic logistical support. Continued support to the FACA in joint deployments on limited military operations is important. But MINUSCA's support, in its next mandate, for the progressive and coordinated deployment in garrisons or decentralized hubs of FACA troops trained by the EUTM is absolutely critical to the extension of the State authority. That, in turn, supports the Central African Republic Government's national defence plan and allows it to demonstrate its willingness to address security and stabilization issues across the whole country. A decentralized army that is able to deploy outside of Bangui is fundamental. With United Nations support, a progressive redeployment of those forces could serve as a concrete example of State authority returning to the provinces, and allow MINUSCA an opportunity to redeploy to areas where it is needed most — helping everyone reach their goals.

If MINUSCA's support for the FACA is withdrawn, that progress would almost certainly stall and, with it, MINUSCA's own mission. On its own, FACA does not have the capacity to deploy or sustain itself, and the critical extension of State authority will cease. The most likely outcome would be FACA's return to Bangui, and the opportunity to restore State control will be lost.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Commander Pulkinnen for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Hilale.

Mr. Hilale: In response to your request, Mr. President, I will summarize my briefing.

At the outset, I am grateful for the kind invitation to brief the Security Council on opportunities and challenges to build and sustain peace in the

Central African Republic, in my capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The fragility of the situation in the Central African Republic remains a concern, with renewed fighting and the emergence of new humanitarian hotspots. At the same time, the combined commitment from the Government, the United Nations system and all other stakeholders to long-term solutions is starting to pay off. Despite delays, the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and the restoration of State authority are progressing. Efforts are under way to coordinate the deployment of internal security forces, justice actors and providers of basic social services to reinforce the social contract between the population and the State. As we move forward, it will be important to ensure the sequencing and complementarity among reconciliation efforts, the restoration of State authority and delivering peace dividends to the population.

The Central African Republic configuration works to bring a long-term focus to stabilization, reconciliation and development efforts in the country, guided by national priorities. To that end, we provide political accompaniment to the country, promote an integrated and coherent approach to international and regional peacebuilding efforts and draw attention to glaring resource and capacity gaps in the Central African Republic.

In 2017, the configuration focused on the Brussels commitments to implement the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, primarily Pillar 1, which encompasses security sector reform; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; the rule of law and reconciliation. In line with our commitment to assess the Plan's implementation with multiple stakeholders, I met with World Bank officials last week in Washington, D.C. During our discussions, we addressed resource and capacity gaps that are hampering the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Planand focused on the World Bank's role in its implementation.

I would like to present to the Council some key observations.

First, Central African Republic is at a critical juncture. The Government needs to be supported to drive the reforms necessary for the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan. In Bangui, New York and Washington, D.C., and together with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, I have continued to urge the Government and donors that a robust commitment from both sides is critical for the Plan to succeed. Although $2.23 billion was pledged at the Brussels conference, the delivery rate of ongoing projects for which financing has already been secured was only 16 per cent in 2017. From my contacts with the United Nations, the World Bank and other stakeholders, I understand that the absorption capacity of the Central African Republic Government, the lack of coordination across the line ministries and the absence of the Government and the presence of armed groups across the territory are also perceived to hamper the effective and speedy use of resources.

Secondly, we need to encourage the positive developments regarding the restoration of State authority. There has been progress in the deployment of prefects and sub-prefects in the provinces, and coordination among national institutions has improved at the national and provincial levels. The Government is also engaged in redeploying the national army — the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA) — as well as the national police and gendarmerie, within the broader context of the security sector reform and the extension of State authority. We encourage the Government to both deploy civil servants and to try to provide basic services. That is the only path to lasting stability.

Thirdly, long-term security depends on the prioritization of justice and the fight against impunity. In that regard, we welcome the extradition today from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Bangui of the individual known as "Romaric". He is suspected to be responsible for the massacre of Moroccan and Cambodian Blue Helmets in Bangassou last May. The national Special Criminal Court is an innovative structure that will allow impunity to be addressed. However, the Special Criminal Court faces multiple challenges, including resource deficits for the next five years.

While a strategy on witness and victim protection both for the Special Criminal Court and the national system more broadly has been developed, serious gaps remain on witness and victim protection. The draft rules of procedure and evidence, which will provide guidance for witness protection mechanisms, should be adopted soon. At the same time, we must balance the focus on the Special Criminal Court by supporting the Central African Republic's national justice system. Despite the recent progress of the ordinary courts in Bangui and Bouar, the resumption of justice activities

outside Bangui remains challenging. The challenges are mainly due to insufficient security, difficulties in paying salaries and the lack of equipment.

Fourthly, as the configuration committed to fostering coherence among stakeholders, we strongly support the African initiative that brings together all peace efforts under the Libreville road map, based on their comparative advantages. While maintaining security outside of Bangui remains a challenge, dialogue initiatives at the local level with armed groups have proceeded with support from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic towards violence reduction and reconciliation. We look forward to seeing that initiative contribute to the implementation and success of the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration process.

The development and implementation of a realistic and clear reconciliation strategy is a top priority for 2018. The creation of the truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation commission announced during the 2015 Bangui Forum has been slow to be activated. It is important that this structure be operationalized to reassure victims waiting for justice pending the start of trials by the Special Criminal Court.

Fifthly, and finally, economic recovery will be key to maintaining faith in State institutions and overcoming the humanitarian crisis. It is encouraging that President Touadéra has prioritized development efforts in the north, where perceptions of marginalization have fuelled conflict. Addressing such horizontal inequalities will be critically important to sustain peace.

I would like to conclude by thanking the Central African authorities for their commitment to the implementation of the activities of the configuration. I would also like to thank the members of the configuration, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Onanga-Anyanga and his team, as well as the Peacebuilding Support Office for its tireless efforts in support of the people of the Central African Republic.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ambassador Hilale for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Tanoh-Boutchoue.

Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to brief the members of the Council in my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic. In my statement, I intend to provide an overview of the Committee's work since my predecessor last briefed the Council on 15 February 2017 (see S/PV.7884), and in so doing highlight the activities of the Committee and the Panel of Experts.

Over the course of 2017, there were a number of positive developments in the Central African Republic, including the start of political consultations within the framework of the African Union initiative and the progress achieved in engaging representatives of armed groups in disarmament and demobilization and security sector reform. Despite all those advances, however, the heightened level of violence in the south-east and north-west last year has reminded us of the worst developments in the country in 2013 and 2014, with the number of internally displaced persons and refugees reaching unprecedented levels, while civilians, Blue Helmets and humanitarian actors have been regularly attacked by predatory armed groups.

Since my predecessor's last briefing, the Committee has convened a total of eight meetings — on 23 February, 31 March, 12 May, 21 July, 6 September, 4 and 29 December 2017 and 26 January 2018. While press releases summarizing those meetings are available on the Committee's webpage, I wish to highlight several activities of the Committee that speak to the implementation of sanction measures.

The Committee has continued to work closely with the Central African authorities, regional and neighbouring States, and, on 6 September and 26 January, convened its first open briefings, which were available to all Member States. Those open briefings have proven to be very useful and engaging, and have provided Committee members and the invited regional States with an opportunity to hear the views of the broader membership of the Organization on how to enhance the implementation of sanctions by regional States and those neighbouring the Central African Republic. Most important, though, they have allowed us to see the complete picture on the ways in which we can address cross-border arms trafficking and trafficking in natural resources.

It is clear to me that regional cooperation among neighbouring States in countering illicit networks, the illegal exploitation of natural resources and cross-border trafficking in arms and ammunition is key in

addressing many challenges that countries in Central Africa face. However, without the sanctions regime and other assistance being provided by the international community, those steps may fall short in efficiently eradicating the root causes of the conflict.

In that regard, I would also like to highlight the outstanding work of the United Nations Mine Action Service in ensuring the safe and effective management of weapons and ammunition in the Central African Republic, improving weapons and ammunition storage facilities and building permanent armouries outside Bangui. The Mine Action Service briefed the Committee twice in 2017, on 17 May and again on 4 December, regarding its assistance to the Central African authorities in the implementation of the 2017-2018 small arms road map aimed at developing a national strategy and action plan. On 4 December, the Committee received a briefing for the first time from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, which provided preliminary findings of its report on weapons and ammunition management that is expected to be published by the end of March.

I also wish to underline the work of the members of the Panel of Experts, who are the eyes and ears of the Committee on the ground. Thanks to the Panel's reporting — namely, its midterm and final report, as well as its progress updates, the most recent of which was circulated on 9 February — the Committee is well informed in connection with the implementation of the sanctions measures in the Central African Republic and the region. In that respect, it is important to note that, on 17 May 2017, the Committee added the name of one individual, Abdoulaye Hissène, to its sanctions list. I would also like to emphasize that in 2017, the Panel of Experts submitted three new statements of cases for possible sanctions designation as well as two updated statements. To date, the Panel has submitted a total of 32 statements.

On 29 December, in an example of the Committee's cooperation with the Central African Republic's national authorities, the Committee heard briefings on the implementation of the arms embargo via video teleconference in Bangui from the Ministers of National Defence and Interior and Public Security and from representatives of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the European Union Training Mission in Mali and the Panel of Experts. While fully recognizing and understanding the Central African Republic authorities' legitimate efforts to rearm the national defence and security forces, the Committee also stresses the secure and safe management of arms and ammunition.

During the reporting period, the Committee also worked closely with the Central African Republic, States of the region and other Member States to provide guidance on implementing the arms embargo. In that regard, the Committee and the Panel of Experts are committed to further dialogue with the national authorities in order to ensure that the arms embargo can be seen to be helping the Government to rearm the defence and security forces while fully complying with its provisions. The ongoing deterioration in the security situation, particularly in the south-eastern and north-western areas of the country, along with the easy availability of arms and ammunition, makes effective implementation of the embargo essential.

With regard to the travel ban, the Committee and the Panel of Experts have continued to actively engage with regional States, particularly Kenya and Ethiopia, in following up on reported violations, while emphasizing that appropriate exemption procedures aimed at promoting mediation activities may be used ahead of the proposed travel in accordance with the sanctions measures, as detailed in resolution 2339 (2017) and the Committee Guidelines. In that regard, I would particularly like to thank the Kenyan authorities for having communicated reliable evidence to the Panel of Experts indicating that a sanctioned individual, Mr. François Bozizé, has been travelling under a different name, which has just been added to the sanctions list. I would therefore like to urge the Central African Republic authorities and all States of the region to fully implement the sanctions measures, including by ensuring that fraudulent, counterfeit, stolen or lost passports, as well as invalidated diplomatic passports, are removed from circulation, as requested in paragraph 12 of resolution 2399 (2018).

Turning to the assets freeze, in its final report the Panel of Experts highlighted the fact that Chad had frozen the assets of the listed individual Abdoulaye Hissène, while noting once again that the Central African Republic authorities have still not frozen the accounts and assets of Alfred Yékatom and Eugène Ngaïkosset. According to the Panel of Experts, the Central African Republic authorities have also continued paying Yékatom and Ngaïkosset's salaries, in violation of the assets freeze. On behalf of the Committee, I once again urge the authorities to fully

implement the sanctions measures and immediately freeze the assets of the individuals in question.

In conclusion, I would like to inform the Council that this year I intend to visit the Central African Republic and several States of the region in order to be able to talk directly and frankly with the appropriate officials on the ground, convey the importance of ensuring that the sanctions measures are fully implemented and outline the relevant exemption procedures.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the convening of this meeting. We would like to thank Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and the other briefers for their presentations.

Peru is committed to maintaining and sustaining peace in the Central African Republic. We contribute to MINUSCA through our deployment of a division of engineers from our armed forces, which gives us yet another reason to follow the situation in the Central African Republic with special attention. The humanitarian crisis remains urgent and the deteriorating security situation in most of the country has hindered consolidation of the modest progress that has been made in the political process. With that in mind, I would like to discuss three specific aspects that require our attention:

The first is the urgent need to end the violence. We are concerned about the permanent state of conflict in most of the country, the inter-ethnic violence, the attacks on the civilian population, MINUSCA personnel and humanitarian workers, and about armed groups' access to weapons. To that must be added the clashes over the control of various areas and the exploitation of natural resources. Transhumance corridors have become spaces for illegal business and crime. We commend the efforts of MINUSCA and the European Union to help build military and police forces capable of dealing with these threats, and we emphasize the importance of advancing programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

My second point is the importance of reconstructing and consolidating the State and extending its presence throughout the country. That in turn implies the importance of promoting a peaceful, inclusive society focused on sustainable peace and development. In that regard, we welcome the efforts of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, launched by the African Union, which has been facilitating dialogue between armed groups and civil society. We believe that it should include groups of women and young people, with a view to establishing institutions oriented towards sustainable peace. We also consider the consideration of the issue of incitement to violence by resolution 2399 (2018) — the most recent resolution on sanctions for the Central African Republic — to be a positive step.

We emphasize the importance of arriving at agreements and commitments that will enable progress to be made in implementing the plan for expanding the prefectures with a view to improving the country's stability, security and development. One of the underlying causes of the conflict in the Central African Republic is the difficult socioeconomic reality, which contributes to its instability. It will be crucial to to find ways to create jobs, particularly for young people, order to prevent extremism and relapses into violence. The international community should therefore support the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan.

My third point is the importance of doing more to protect the civilian population. We recognize the efforts of the Central African Republic authorities to strengthen the judicial system and combat impunity, particularly their authorization of the Special C"iminal Court. However, we deplore the recurrent shameful violations of human rights in the country. Firm action must be taken to investigate and prosecute abuses in that regard, including sexual violence and the widespread participation of children in the conflict.

Peru acknowledges and supports the work that MINUSCA is doing to protect civilians and provide humanitarian assistance, as well as its efforts to uphold the political process, despite the adverse environment and complex operational situations that may arise.

We believe that the Mission's operational capacities should be strengthened. We note with concern that 100 per cent of the authorized force has not yet been deployed, and stress the need to ensure the safety of the Blue Helmets on the ground. In that regard, and finally, we wish to express our support for the Secretary-

General's decision to address this problem, which is a cross-cutting issue in many peace operations.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is grateful for the report of the Secretary-General presented by Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) (S/2018/125), to whom we extend our sincere congratulations for the commendable and noble work he is doing in Central Africa. We also wish to extend these congratulations to the entire MINUSCA team. We also thank Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union for Central Africa, and Lieutenant General Esa Pulkkinen, Director of Military Planning and Conduct Capability of the European Union, for participating in today's meeting.

We also thank and welcome Ambassador Bernard Tanoh-Boutchoue of Côte d'Ivoire, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic, and Ambassador Omar Hilale of Morocco, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's configuration for Central Africa, for their briefings. Both provided us with a clear illustration of the current situation in this brotherly country of ours, the Central African Republic.

Having heard the briefings, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea expresses its concern at the current atmosphere of violence being fomented by some armed groups in the country, which affects not only the parties to the conflict but also has a serious impact on the civilian population, in particular the most vulnerable segments — women and children — thereby further aggravating the critical humanitarian situation, weakening the State and facilitating the unrestrained activity of mafias in plundering its natural resources throughout the country. In that context, Equatorial Guinea condemns the recent attacks perpetrated by the previously mentioned armed groups against on civilians and MINUSCA and expresses its deep regret at the loss of human lives, both of MINUSCA personnel and Central African citizens who have been victims of the consequences of the violence.

Despite the outstanding progress and success of the elections in March 2016, as well as the United Nations presence to strengthen stability, support the Government and provide humanitarian assistance, the Central African Republic continues to suffer from unrest and instability, resulting in the violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, giving rise to hundreds of victims — men, women and children — who have been subjected to sexual violence, trafficking in persons, arrests, detentions and displacement. Equatorial Guinea calls on all armed groups to lay down their arms and appeals to the parties to the conflict to renounce all sectarian interests so as to allow for a dialogue leading to peacebuilding and the stabilization of the country. Equatorial Guinea re-emphasizes the need for strict monitoring of the tripartite agreement signed on 23 May 2011 in Khartoum.

Equatorial Guinea welcomes the efforts of the Government of the brotherly Central African Republic, under the leadership of President Touadera, in concert with the international community, aimed at State-building after the conclusion of the political transition. Those efforts involve disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and also involve reform of the security and defence forces. The ultimate goal is to achieve national reconciliation and stability.

The Central African Republic will achieve the desired stability if it is able to make a genuine national reconciliation effort through frank, direct and inclusive political dialogue. It is important for all the stakeholders involved to act by putting their country's supreme interests first; only in that way can lasting peace and stability be achieved.

Although much progress has been made in the right direction, much remains to be done to rebuild the country. The role of the international community is particularly crucial in enhancing what the African Union and regional structures, particularly the Economic Community of Central African States, can do in this process. MINUSCA is also instrumental in that regard, and its results have been very positive.

Stability in Central Africa implies stability for the entire Central African region, which is why the region's top leaders have been extensively involved in the search for a solution, including sending forces when the situation has required it. Equatorial Guinea has been no exception: for a long time, His Excellency President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo has been involved

in assistance and mediation efforts in conjunction with all stakeholders.

Mr. Tachauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/125) presented by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, and we take this opportunity to reiterate our full support for its recommendations. We also take this opportunity to thank all of today's briefers.

The ongoing violence promoted by the armed groups, the asymmetrical attacks and the constant inter-ethnic and intercommunal confrontations driven by the competition to exert control over the territory and its natural resources show that work still needs to be done in the area of security and are factors that aggravate the critical humanitarian situation on a daily basis. According to the latest report of the Secretary-General, approximately 50 per cent of the population in that country depends on outside assistance to survive, and 2.5 million Central Africans require urgent humanitarian assistance, 100,000 more than in the previous period. The number of internally displaced persons increased by 70 per cent in 2017, reaching a total of 1.2 million people, the highest rate in the history of the Central African Republic. Food insecurity has increased and currently affects one out of every two people. Approximately 500 schools closed at the end of 2017 due to insecurity, including in some regions where there are now no schools open. That is why we are calling on the international community to continue its support so as to address the population's growing need for the humanitarian assistance and provide financing that is predictable and sustainable.

Furthermore, Bolivia condemns the constant attacks perpetrated by armed groups against civilians, MINUSCA and the peacekeeping forces. We value and salute the members of the Mission — the military, police and civilian personnel — who are working in a volatile and high-risk environment. We commend the Mission's efforts to identify regions where additional capacity is needed to protect the civilian population, in particular its strategy for the prevention of violence in connection with migration. In that regard, and in order to increase their efficiency, we encourage them to implement the recommendations of the internal report regarding the special investigation concerning the protection of civilians, so that they may effectively carry out their mandate in accordance with resolution 2387 (2017). We also reiterate that sexual exploitation and abuse are unacceptable, and we support MINUSCA in continuing its efforts to ensure compliance with the zero-tolerance policy.

Despite the complicated context of the security situation, we highlight the progress in the protection of civilians, the strengthening of State authority, inter-institutional cooperation, the training of the Central African armed forces, inter alia. Such activities genuinely strengthen the peace process, and should be built upon and fully implemented.

Similarly, we highlight the new prefectural administration, the approval of the national budget for 2018 and the development of a strategic framework for security sector reform. We commend the Government of the Central African Republic, led by President Touadéra, on its quest for reconciliation, inclusive dialogue and understanding among the parties. We also welcome ongoing efforts to restore the court system and the progress made to end impunity, including the condemnation of armed groups, the operationalization of the Special Criminal Court, the demilitarization of the prison system and the development of a strategic framework for security sector reform. We reiterate the importance of equal participation in all these areas and within the overall peace process.

We condemn all acts to incite violence — in particular on ethnic or religious grounds — that undermine peace, stability and security in the Central African Republic. Once again, we call on all armed groups to lay down their weapons, put aside sectarian interests of all kinds that hinder fruitful dialogue, and reach agreements that are in the interests of the civilian population and the stability of the country. In addition, we call on them to fully commit to the process of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration.

We urge the Central African Republic to implement its national programme on demobilization, disarmament and reintegration. We underscore the efforts of and the support provided by MINUSCA and the United Nations Mine Action Service. We highlight the work of both entities in the area of humanitarian demining.

In conclusion, we welcome the active and ongoing support of regional and subregional organizations, the participation of the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the panel of facilitators of the African Initiative for Peace and

Reconciliation, whose political efforts towards peace and cooperation are of paramount importance to the process of reconciliation, with strict respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Central African Republic. Central Africans are primarily responsible for achieving peace and stability in their country.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Ms. Kpongo (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Kuwait on assuming the presidency of the Security Council in February, as this is the first time I am taking the floor during its mandate.

I am pleased to take part in today's Security Council meeting in order to, first, thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for his briefing, and, secondly, to sincerely thank the Mission for its ongoing efforts to restore peace to a country struggling to recover after such a protracted crisis. I also thank all who spoke for their important statements.

The end of the political transition and the organization of credible and democratic elections granted us the freedom to hope. Life began again. We all welcomed the noteworthy progress observed in various areas but then, as if by magic, inter-community and ethnic violence broke out almost all over the country. After reading the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/125), I said to myself that the country was not far from the relapse into conflict we all feared. We concluded that 2017 was the most critical year, with threats that could have led to a tipping point.

We welcome the joint operation carried out by MINUSCA and the Forces armées centrafricaines, which reduced the number of armed groups in areas around Paoua. We encourage such military action in all areas where it is needed, as it could ease tensions among the warring parties and reduce the threat posed by them over the long term. It is clear that rivalries between armed groups and self-defence militias exacerbate and sustain violence.

Opportunistic political leaders do not desire an end to the crisis. They use all means at their disposal, such as manipulation, to encourage armed groups and self-defence militias, who are paid by them, to commit all kinds of abuses against the civilian population and the Blue Helmets and to spread hate speech, with the sole aim of dividing Central Africans in an effort to better control the situation.

My delegation welcomes the fact that incitement to violence and inflammatory rhetoric were included as designation criteria in resolution 2399 (2018) on extending the sanctions regime against the Central African Republic. We hope that such measures will have the desired effect. To that end, the Central African Government and MINUSCA must implement resolution 2399 (2018) without delay so that troublemakers know they will be brought to justice.

Resolution 2387 (2017) of 14 November 2017 confers other major duties on MINUSCA, such as providing support to local peace initiatives and to consultations conducted by the panel of facilitators of the African initiative with the main armed groups, civil society and other actors in the Central African crisis. The Council must ensure that the Mission has substantial means commensurate with the ever-increasing number of duties entrusted to it.

In conclusion, given that we do not have enough time to address the other aspects of the situation, I would like to reiterate my delegation's gratitude for the excellent cooperation between the Government of the Central African Republic and MINUSCA in their attempts to manage this complex situation. We sincerely thank the Head of the Mission, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for his commitment and determination to help the Government and the people of the Central African Republic to emerge from this protracted nightmare. We also thank all of our bilateral and international partners for their unwavering support.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.